SOME

RULES

FOR

SPEAKING

AND

ACTION.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

SOME

RULES

FOR

SPEAKING

AND

ACTION;

To be obſerved

At the BAR, in the PULPIT and the SENATE, and by every one that SPEAKS in PUBLICK.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

Eſt enim Actio *quaſi Corporis quædam Eloquentia, cùm Conſtet é* Voce *atquè* Motu. *Vocis* Mutationes *totidem ſunt, quot Animorum, qui Maximè Voce Commoventur.*

TUL.

DUBLIN:

Printed for WILLIAM BRIEN, Bookſeller in *Dame-ſtreet.*

SOME

RULES

FOR

SPEAKING

AND

ACTION.

SIR,

EVERY Orator ſhould form in his Mind a very ſtrong *Idea* of the Subject he is upon, and be firſt thoroughly touch'd with his Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe himſelf, before he can expect to touch and move others.

THERE muſt be nothing offenſive to the *Ear* in *Pronunciation*, nor to the *Eye* in *Action*; but all *Speech* and *Geſture* ſhould ſeem *Natural*, and the nearer they come to *Nature*, the nearer they are to *Perfection*.

DEMOSTHENES exercis'd his *Voice*, and regulated his *Action*, before a great Glaſs; but you, SIR, may ſooner learn to excel, by ſeeing and hearing good Patterns, imitating what you like, avoiding, or altering, what you diſlike in them, and by employing a Faithful and Judicious Friend to correct the Errors in your *Geſture* and *Accent*.

A FIRM

A FIRM Articulate *Voice*, and a ſtrong *Pronunciation*, are very great Advantages to any Man who ſpeaks in publick; but then an *Orator* ſhould take Care to deliver himſelf *Clearly*, *Smoothly*, and not ſo *Loud* as to put his *Voice* upon the *Stretch*: For all boiſterous *Words* and *Actions* are unartful and offenſive; and we may obſerve that *Stentor* is not numbered among *Homer*'s fine Speakers; and that *Cicero* deriided the *Rhetoricians* of his Time for their Noiſe and Bawling.

EVERY Man indeed ſhould *fill* the Place where he ſpeaks, but if He exceeds the *Natural Key* of his Voice, it will be neither *Sweet*, nor *Soft*, nor *Agreeable*; he will not be able to give every

every *Syllable* its full and distinct *Sound*, nor to pronounce the Words concluding a *Period*, which should always be spoke *Audibly*, so as to be heard without Pain.

So far, Sir, should an *Orator* be from speaking in one *continued Tone*, that he ought above all Things to study the *Variation* of his *Voice*; yet it should be done in such a regular Manner, as to *change* with the several *different Parts* of the *Subject*, and yet be always so *equal* to *it self*, as to preserve the *Harmony* of *Speech*. But this cannot be preserved, when the Voice is *varied* with too great a *Distinction*; and therefore it should *slide* from one Key to another, and rather *glide* like

like a gentle Stream, than *pour down* like a rapid Torrent.

THE Art of this *Alteration* conſiſts in *Highneſs* and *Lowneſs*, *Vehemence* and *Softneſs*, *Swiftneſs* and *Slowneſs*: The leſs *affected* the *Variation* of the Voice is, 'tis the better and more pleaſing; and the eaſieſt and ſureſt Way to learn it to *Perfection*, is by reading *Aloud* in private Study, minding how we ſpeak in *Common Converſation*, and repeating of *Tragedies*, where all the various Turns of Humane Paſſions are repreſented, and underſtanding ſomewhat of *Singing* and *Muſick*.

A CLEAR and *Sedate* Voice beſt informs the *Underſtanding*, and a *Moderate* Sound is moſt agreeable to the *Ear*, if 'tis *Diſ-*

tinct, and eaſie to be heard; but yet there are ſome Caſes, SIR, in which the Voice muſt be neither *Sedate* nor *Moderate*.

FOR Inſtance,---All Exclamations and Imprecations muſt be *Violent*; good Actions ſhould be expreſs'd in a *Lofty* Accent, bad Ones with a Tone of *Anger* and *Diſdain*; the Happineſs, or the Miſery of Kingdoms, ought to carry an *Higher* Air of Regard than that of a private Man; the Wonders of Providence ſhould be mentioned in a *Grave* Voice, and yet full of *Admiration*; Words of Complaint muſt be in a *Melancholy* Tone, and Words of Leſſening in a *Low* one; when we preſs an Adverſary, the Voice ſhould be *Briſk* and *Quick*; when we addreſs to Inanimates, it ought to be

Higher

Higher than when to Animates; when we appeal to Heaven, it muſt be in a *Loftier* Tone than when to Men; Joy and Sorrow, Fear and Boldneſs, Reſentment and Compaſſion, Eſteem and Contempt, demand *Different Looks* and *Actions.*

We ſhould alſo *Change* the Voice in a *Proſopopœia*, and ſpeak as the Perſon introduced would; in an *Antitheſis*, the one Contrary muſt be *Louder* than the other; in a *Climax*, the Voice ſhould *Riſe* with it; in *Dialogue*, it ſhould *Alter* with the Parts; in a *Repetition*, it ſhould be *Loudeſt* in the *ſecond* Place; Emphatical Words, ſuch as *Certainly*, *Aſſuredly*, *Neceſſarily*, muſt be pronounced with a *Force* and *Diſtinction*: Words of Quality, ſuch as *Grand*, *High*, ſhould have a *Streſs* laid on them;

and ſo muſt Words of *Praiſe* and *Diſpraiſe*.

An Orator, Sir, ſhould *Begin* with a low and modeſt Voice, *Raiſe* it by Degrees as the Subject requires, and *Conclude* with Joy, and Triumph, and Satisfaction. He muſt not ſpeak *Broad*, nor with the Mouth *Wide-open*; he ſhould not deliver himſelf too *Faſt*, nor too *Slow*, but in ſuch a Manner as the *Ear* of the *Hearer* may keep Pace with the *Tongue* of the *Speaker*.

When an *Orator* recovers from a *Paſſion*, or a *Tranſport*, the *Voice* ſhould be *Lower'd*; and when a *following* Period needs a greater *Elevation* than ordinary, he muſt *ſave* the Voice *before* for it.

A SHORT Period ſhould be pronounced in a *Breath*, and he muſt *fetch Breath* in a long Sentence only at *Semi-colons*. He ſhould never *Pauſe* in the *Middle* of an Expreſſion, but at the *End* of a Period: and it muſt be *Short* after a *Short* One, and *Long* after a *Long* One.

THESE few Hints and Sketches, SIR, well attended to and improved, may be ſufficient to inſtruct an *Orator* in the *Art* of *Speaking*. —— The next Part of this *Letter* relates to his *Action*.

AN Orator ſhould never uſe any *Low* or *Mean* Actions, and yet all his Actions ought to ſeem natural; he muſt look *Mournful* on

on *Mournful*, and *Chearful* on *Chearful* Subjects.

The Life of Action is in the *Face*, and conſiſts in the *Voice*, *Eyes*, *Brows* and *Mouth*; and therefore the *whole Face* ſhou'd be adjuſted to the *Matter* in Hand. *Action* muſt be exactly with *Utterance*, and every *Geſture* ſhould expreſs the *Nature* of the *Words* he is *Uttering*. When he introduces *Another* ſpeaking, he ſhould uſe ſuch Actions only as are proper for *Him*.

The Poſture of the *Body* ſhould not *Change* every Moment, nor muſt it *Long* keep the *ſame Poſition*. The *Mouth* ſhould not be *writh'd*, the *Lips bit* or *lick'd*, the *Shoulders ſhrugg'd*, nor the *Belly thruſt out*.

The

The Head muſt not be *Lifted up* too *High*, nor *Stretch'd out* too *far*, nor *Thrown back*, nor *Hang* on the *Breaſt*, nor always *Lean* on the *Shoulders*. In all calm Speeches, it ought to keep its *natural State*, and *upright Poſition*. It muſt not be *without Motion*, nor *always Moving*, but ſhould gently *Turn* to the *Neck*, ſometimes on *one* Side, ſometimes on the *Other*, as Occaſion requires, that the Voice may be *Heard* by all the *Audience*, and then *Return* to its *natural Poſture* again. The *Head* ſhould be on the *ſame ſide* with the *Actions* of the *Body*, except when he expreſſes an *Averſion* to any Thing, which is done by *Rejecting* it with the *Right Hand*, and *Turning* the *Head* to the *Left*.

His

His Eyes ſhould be always on ſome of the *Audience*, gently turning from *ſide to ſide*, with an Air of *Reſpect*, and looking them decently in the *Face*, as in *Common Diſcourſe*.

But in *Appeals* to *Heaven*, or when he ſpeaks of *Heaven*, the *Eyes* muſt *Turn up*; when he mentions *Hell*, or *Earth*, or Things *Terreſtrial*, they ſhould *Turn down*. He muſt alſo look down in *Humility*, up in *Honour*; and *Lift up* both *Eyes* and *Hands* in *Atteſtations*, *Vows*, *Oaths*, and *Exclamations*.

The Hands, Sir, need never be *idle*. They ſhould Correſpond with *each other* in all regular Geſtures, but if one *Hand*

is uſed, it muſt be the *Right*. When an *Orator* ſpeaks of *himſelf*, the *Right Hand* ſhould be gently laid on the *Breaſt*. All *Actions* muſt paſs from the *Left* to the *Right* Hand, and there end. The *Motion* of the *Hands* muſt juſt *agree* with what he is *ſaying*, as either *uniting* or *ſeparating*, *inviting* or *forbidding*, *raiſing* or *depreſſing*.

The Hands ſhould never be lifted up *above* the *Eyes*, nor ſhould they be much *lower*; Neither Hand muſt *hang down*, but they ſhould be always in *view* of the *Eyes*, and correſponding with the *Motions* of the *Head*, *Eyes* and *Body*. The *Arms* ſhould not ſtretch out *Sideways* above *half* a *Foot* from the *Trunk* of the Body.

THE *Left Hand*, SIR, as I hinted before, ſhould never be uſed *Alone*; nor muſt either *Elbow lean* upon the *Pulpit* or the *Bar*. We ſhould avoid all *Action* in the *Exordium* to a Sermon or a Speech; and *Begin* a Following Period always a Degree Lower than we *Concluded* the Former.

AND NOW, SIR, ſince a Genteel *Motion*, a Fine *Geſture*, the Gallantry and Air of *Delivery*, mix'd with Courtlineſs and Moderation, with Decency and Good Grace, added to the *Harmony* of a Delicate *Voice*, charm an Audience more than all the Figures of *Rhetorick*, ſure an *Orator* ſhould conſider well before he ſpeaks, and even whilſt he is

ſpeaking,

ſpeaking, how to Frame his *Voice* and Move his *Body*; he ſhould avoid as much as poſſible all *Coughing* and *Spitting*, practiſe the Rules of Pronunciation and Geſture in *Ordinary Diſcourſe*, to make 'em the more natural to him, and endeavour to *Lengthen* his *Breath* by Study and Exerciſe. Nor can I think it any Fault in a young Gentleman of your Profeſſion, SIR, to ſee ſuch a modeſt Play as *Cato* or *Abramule* ſometimes.

QUI ſtudet optatam Curſu
(Contingere Metam
Multa Tulit, Fecitquè Puer; Su-
(davit & Alſit;
Abſtinuit Venere & Vino.——

THUS, in Obedience to your Commands, SIR, I have run

over what Books I could in this ſhort Time, which lay down *Rules for ſpeaking and Action in Publick*; and though this *Letter* is an *Epitome* of Volumes, and may ſave you ſome *Time*, and *Pains*, and *Charge*, yet it does not pretend to be *compleat*; nor will any Thing on this *Subject*, which depends ſo much upon *Humour* and *Fancy*, ever be thought *perfect*: But this I can venture to ſay, that what I here preſent you with is true *Sterling*, and you may either *keep* it thus in *Barrs*, or *draw* it *out* into *Wire*.

I HAVE thrown all the *Matter* I met with into the ſhorteſt *Compaſs*, without regarding any Ornaments of *Dreſs*, which could not

not be obſerved without ſwelling my *Obſervations* beyond the Size of a *Letter*. The *Books* I conſulted, indeed, ſeem'd to me to be like *Bladders* diſtended with *Wind*; and I am ſure you will forgive me for *ſqueezing* the *Wind* out of them, and bringing more *Lines* than ever *Homer* writ into a *Nut-ſhell*.

I HAVE long thought every Part of *Science* in a *Dropſie*, cumbered with *Wens* and *Swellings*, and wiſhed ſome kind Hands would reduce them to *natural Shapes*; but I never knew ſo well *how much* a Man muſt Read for a *little Knowledge*, 'till you were pleas'd to impoſe this *Task* on me. If

Ars

Ars longa Vita brevis was the Complaint of *Old*, how cruel are *Thoſe* who make *Art* ſtill *longer* as *Life* grows *ſhorter?*

THIS Abuſe, SIR, is chiefly owing to the *Bookſellers*, who *Buy* and *Sell* by *Bulk* and *Weight*. Every Man, ſay they, deſires to have *enough* for his *Money*, and but few *Readers* mind whether 'tis *Lead* or *Gold*: And moſt *Authors* having more *Words* than *Senſe*, they uſe them All to *Enhanſe* their *Price*, and ſo draw the *Shadow* much *longer* than the *Subſtance*.

SINCE the *Gravity* of our *Iſle*, SIR, will not bear *much Action*, we ſhould take Care to

ſelect

ſelect the *Beſt*; and I dare promiſe that if you *practiſe* theſe *Hints*, and add your own *Obſervations* to them, you will ſoon *perfect* your *Voice* and *Geſture*.

In Town, Sir, you have ſo many Examples worthy Imitation, both in the *Senate*, on the *Bench*, at the *Bar* and in the *Pulpit*, that if you well attend to them, you can want little other Direction; as *Cowper* and *Harcourt*, *Hanmer* and *Lechmere*, *Parker* and *Price*, *Powis* and *Vernon*, *Canterbury* and *York*, *Ely* and *Rocheſter*, *Stanhope* and *Moſs*; and therefore I ſhall *Laſtly*, refer you to thoſe *Living Rules*, to make up the

Deficiency of *These*, and subscribe my self,

SIR,

Your most Affectionate

Humble Servant.

FINIS.